



The Arboretum Bulletin



VOL. I. No. 11.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

SEPTEMBER, 1938

THE ARBORETUM

The University of Washington Arboretum is making exceptionally fine progress. Throughout the entire Northwest civic organizations and civic minded individuals are manifesting keen interest in its development. They are fast coming to appreciate what the Arboretum will mean to the advancement of this section of the United States. In a few short years it will rank with the finest arboreta of the world, and owing to the splendid climatic conditions prevailing, will have advantages that cannot be equaled elsewhere.

Visitors by the thousands flock to the national capital each year to view the Japanese cherry tree blooms. When Azalea Way and Rhododendron Glen, in our own Arboretum, are a reality, as they will be in just a little while, this living picture will be even more magnificent.

This is not alone the belief of those who are sponsoring the Arboretum but of cultured men and women throughout the country who are familiar with the famous gardens of the world. Many of them have predicted that travelers from every section of this country and of foreign countries will take advantage of the great beauties the Arboretum will offer, to visit the Pacific Northwest.

We wonder if you, as a citizen of the Northwest, interested as all of us are in its advancement, are doing your part to help in the development of this great garden of beautiful plant life. "What can I do?" you ask. And the answer is: "Join the Arboretum Foundation." Memberships are as little as two dollars a year. If you are garden-minded you will get these few dollars back each year through the distribution of surplus plants and seeds which the Arboretum gives to the members of the Foundation. But join the Arboretum Foundation, regardless of whether you are a gardener or garden-minded. You cannot

do a finer thing in a small way to hurry along the advancement and development of the very delightful section of the United States in which you are so fortunate as to make your home.

If you are interested in seeing for yourself just what is being done at the Arboretum, let us tell you about the regular tours through the grounds which are conducted by the Arboretum Foundation. You are urgently invited to communicate with or to visit the office of the Arboretum Foundation, 4420 White Building, Seattle. Office hours are 8:30 to 12 and 1 to 2:30, except Saturday and Sunday. The telephone is Seneca 0920.

SHORT NOTES ON RHODODENDRONS

By ENDRE GSTRO
Grower and Propagator for the Arboretum

The ideal spot in which to plant rhododendrons is one which is sheltered from wind, well drained, and which gets some shade, particularly shade in the morning where the dew lingers on a little longer and keeps the air moist.

These two things are, in my judgment, far more important to good rhododendron growing than the soil itself. Of course, rhododendrons do not like a limy soil and will not do well in a soil composed mostly of strip clay. Lime, especially, is objectionable to them. Fortunately, we have very little limy soil in this part of the country. Practically all of the woodland soil and the top soil in cities where grass will grow is satisfactory for rhododendrons. Do not plant rhododendrons under cut leaf birch trees. The drip from these trees coats the foliage of the rhododendrons and seriously injures them. To plant under maple trees is none too good, but it may be done if no other situation

is available. After all, shade from maple trees is better than no shade at all. Leaf mold from maple and poplar trees is not as good as that from alder and apple trees.

One very common mistake is to plant rhododendrons too deep, particularly if the soil is heavy. This is often injurious and sometimes will ruin the rhododendrons. Just cover the old clumps lightly and if the soil settles or washes away so that the roots are exposed, cover with good soil again and mulch. It is easier to add more soil if necessary, than it is to replant your rhododendrons, and the latter is what you must do if they are planted too deep.

If you are planting your rhododendrons close to a new building, care should be taken to see that no plaster or cement is in the soil, for its presence will interfere with the proper growth and development of the shrubs, in fact, it might kill them. The ideal soil is a fine, deep loam, with peat and rotted sod added. The beds should be kept well surfaced at all times with peat and leaf mold. This makes the soil moist and cool and enables the fine roots to grow freely right up to the surface, where they may feed and thrive on the mulch, which slowly but surely decays and turns into good soil. In Nature the mulch always keeps up with the falling leaves.

Do not add fertilizer at planting time. After a year or two, old, well rotted cow manure placed on top of the bed will prove to be most helpful to the rhododendrons in their effort to make good growth and produce fine blossoms. Bone meal should never be used. It will do harm, not good. A sprinkling of cotton seed meal after blooming, which is the time when the new growth starts, and again in the summer, when buds are setting, is excellent for rhododendrons. But even this can be overdone. Err on the side of giving them too little rather than too much. It's quite a simple matter to add a little more later on if necessary, but it is not so easy to correct the mistake of having used too much at one time.

Plenty of water, at the right time, is absolutely essential to the health and happiness of rhododendrons. They should be well supplied with it, from blooming time to the time the buds for next year's blooms are formed. This is particularly essential for the late blooming varieties.

In a dry spring, such as the one we had this year, rhododendrons should be well watered just before blooming. If this is done the blooms will last longer and hold their color better. Do not water rhododendrons when the sun is shining or in the late morning. The sun often burns the leaves when the water is on them. Better to do your watering in the late afternoon or evening.

In late summer too much water may start a second growth, which is not good for next year's blooms. Better to water sparingly so that the shrubs will ripen up and rest, and not be forced into another growth late in the season.

MORE RHODODENDRONS FOR THE ARBORETUM

(Reprinted from THE SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER, August 21, 1938)

Mr. C. O. Dexter of Sandwich, Mass., who has already contributed a carload of choice azaleas and rhododendrons to the Arboretum, is again making a noteworthy gift that evidences his interest in this important development. According to Herbert Ihrig, chairman of the Rhododendron Committee of the Arboretum, just back from an eastern trip, during which he spent a week-end with Mr. Dexter, the latter is sending us scions of eighty of his choicest hybrid rhododendrons. The character of his work in creating these hardy plants is one widely recognized throughout the East, where choice hybrids are limited. And while we of western Washington can use most of the English hybrids, this contribution will bring us many plants on a par with the best of the English crosses and further enable us to display varieties that can be used in the colder sections of the state.

Contrary to the usual American practice, Mr. Dexter has discarded the North American Rhododendrons in making his crosses and has used in their place the hardy Asiatics.

The Fortuneii series plays a very important part in these new plants, and crossed with Britannia, Corona, and other fine English hybrids, produces some lovely pinks with the wonderful foliage of the Fortuneii series, as well as the latter's velvety flower texture.

"We owe a great debt to Mr. Dexter," says Mr. Ihrig, "for the thought and consideration given the University of Washington Arboretum, for in selecting these plants it was necessary to go through his large estate daily during the flowering season, making notes and descriptions of the loveliest things he has developed."

What with the fine Tenny collection of species rhododendrons, the numerous gifts from the generous Mr. Dexter, the purchase of many of England's best species and hybrids and the hybridizing and propagating of choice varieties being carried on in Arboretum greenhouses and nurseries, Rhododendron Glen will, within a few short years, outclass any other rhododendron show in America and rank with the world's best. The late Ernest Wilson of Arnold Arboretum said, more than twenty years ago, that climatic conditions in the Puget Sound country were such that we could grow a greater variety of these fine shrubs and trees than any other section of the United States. That is now the aim of the Arboretum.

PHLOX ADSURGENS

By P. B. TRUAX

So many gardeners are under the impression that the growth of *Phlox Adsurgens* presents formidable difficulties that I should like to state my experience in the hope that it will be helpful to others.

I find that if untreated cuttings are taken in early September and placed in a 50-50 mixture of sand and peat moss, in a cold frame protected only against extremes in weather—wet and cold—they strike almost invariably, and even these very young plants produce a few blooms the first year. I say untreated cuttings, because those are the only ones I have tried. They root so easily there has been no occasion to use either of the root-growing mediums. This phlox likes a sandy, acid soil, and I find that light shade is an advantage as direct sun rays bleach the blooms.

My own experience leads me to conclude that the nurseries are to blame for some of the difficulties met in establishing this plant. I had a struggle to bring through the first few plants I bought. They appeared to be gathered fragments, long roots and long stems, and there was a high degree of mortality, whereas these rooted cuttings, when transferred to their blooming quarters, succeed nearly, if not quite 100 per cent.

A few well established plants make a gorgeous ground cover, and if given a lightly shaded location, as already suggested, it remains in beauty for a surprisingly long time.

A couple of years ago an English writer referred to *Phlox Mesoleuca* as the finest of the genus, and after a long search I acquired a plant. It is a fairly good pink, but it has a lavenderish cast which is not present in *Adsurgens*, and which is my justification for unhesitatingly assigning a second rating. My guess is that the English writer, too, would give *Adsurgens* a place at the top of the list if he had seen this lovely native of Oregon.

ARBORETUM NEWS OF INTEREST

Just before departing for Honolulu, where he will spend several months, Mr. W. L. Fulmer, one of the best known and most capable gardeners in the Northwest, gave to the Arboretum a collection of choice cacti and other indoor plants, also a number of varieties of choice camellias, and several thousand flower pots of all sizes.

Fall planting is about to start at the Arboretum. First will come the planting of the rock garden. Many choice alpine, sub-alpine and other rock plants which have been growing in the nursery and the greenhouse, will be placed in their new home. Here are some of the plants: *Lewisia*s,

including a large number of the beautiful *Lewisia Tweedyi* from the Wenatchee mountains, one of the finest rock plants in the world; dwarf heathers, including the best of the new species and varieties, such as *Calluna Vulgaris* H. E. Beale, C. v. County Wicklow, Dawn, *Erica Vagans*, St. Keverne, E. v. Mrs. Maxwell and such fine winter bloomers as the white *Erica Carnea* Springwood and the red E. c. Vivelli; many of the best penstemons, a fine collection of dwarf rhododendrons, potentillas, silenes, alliums, dianthus, ramondias, haberleas, gentians, dwarf lilies, campanulas, including the prostrate and very beautiful *Campanula Piperi*, which makes its home amid the rocks of Mt. Angelus; lupines, low growing delphiniums, phloxes, prostrate cotoneasters and genistas; talinums, five or six varieties of lithospermums; oxalis, alpine ferns and many, many other fine rock garden plants.

Carl English, Jr., who ranks with the best of the authorities on American alpine, has given the Arboretum a number of fine plants, including dwarf rhododendrons and gaultherias.

From Arnold Arboretum there came recently, as a gift to the Arboretum, 433 packages of seeds of species and varieties of plants. The seeds were collected in the Chinese country and are believed to include many rare things in plant life. Other arboreta, botanical gardens, private gardens and individuals contributed an additional several hundred packages of seeds.

"We have been very successful this year," says Asst. Supt. Fred Leissler, "in collecting seeds of native flowering plants for domestic and foreign seed exchange purposes. For the third consecutive year we are about to publish our exchange list of plants and seeds. Through this exchange system we obtain for the Arboretum many seeds and plants from different parts of the world that otherwise would be difficult and in some instances impossible to get.

"I wish that more of our members and other friends of the Arboretum, in traveling about the country, would be on the lookout for seeds of named species and varieties of trees, shrubs and vines. It would be of very great help in assisting us to build up our collection. I would suggest that, where possible, we be furnished with information as to the elevation, exposure, growing conditions and locality. In that way we will be in a much better position to make a success of the seeds."

Growing in the Arboretum nursery are a number of fine rock plants, contributed by the well known grower and collector, Charles Waight. These include some of the best of the hybrid aubretias.

Arboretum Foundation, 4420 White Building
SEATTLE
Published by the

THE ARBORETUM BULLETIN

Sec. 562 P. L. & R.